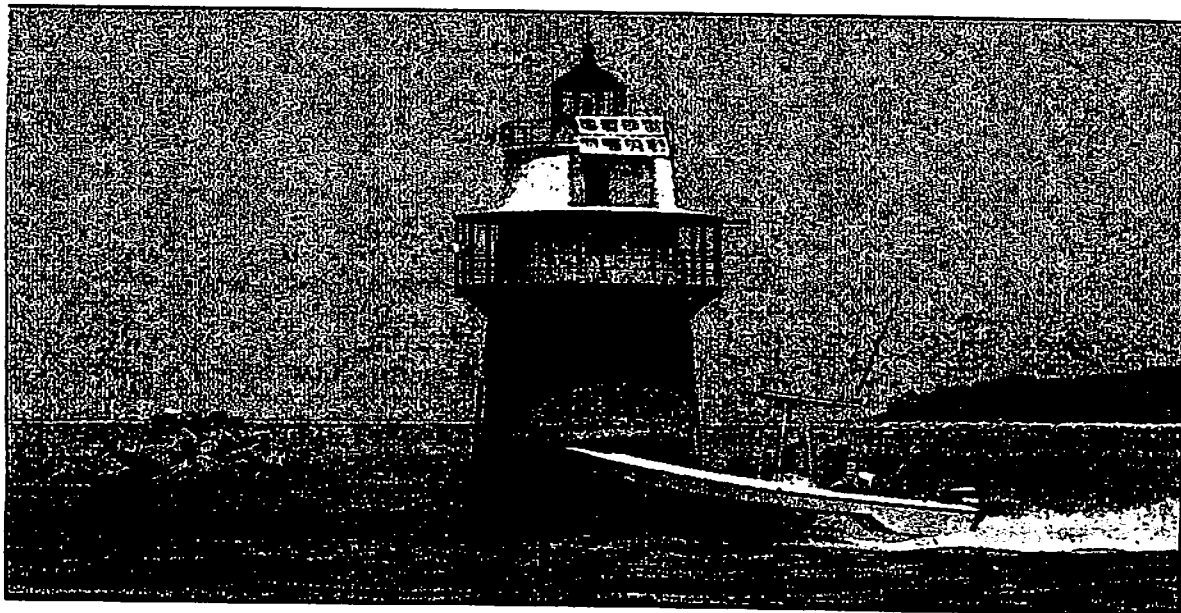


# On and about Duxbury Bay



**History** — Bug Light stands in front of Clark's Island, site of the historical society's annual picnic.

Staff photo/Wesley Ennis

*This is the eighth part in a continuing series about life on Duxbury Bay. This week we take a look at the upcoming annual Duxbury Rural and Historical Society's Clark's Island picnic.*

By Debra Filcman  
MPG Newspapers

South Shore residents can follow in the footsteps of their ancestors, literally, as they step off the boat and onto the rock.

Not Plymouth Rock – Pulpit Rock, or Election Rock (it's known as both), on Clark's Island.

The Duxbury Rural and Historical Society invites the public to join in their annual picnic Sunday, Aug. 7, which commemorates the first settlement and Sabbath in the New World.

The family-friendly picnic usually draws between 100-200 people from all over the South Shore. A

nearly 35-year tradition, it provides a rare opportunity for a gander at the privately owned island, said historical society director Patrick Browne.

The society is, however, one of the owners. Cedarfield, a small home and barn built on the island in 1836, once belonged to poet and professor Sarah Wingate Taylor. It's the second oldest house on the island. Taylor used the property as a sort of artist's colony; it served a summer program for graduate students.

"It's hard to imagine it being used that way because it's really such a small space," Browne said. "But I guess they all bunked together in the barn and had a leisurely schedule of engaging in whatever art form they did."

Taylor, who had no children,

See PICNIC, Page A31

FRIDAY, JULY 15, 2005

DUXBURY REPORTER

# Picnic celebrates history

## ■ PICNIC, from Page A1

passed away in 1969. Two years later, her cousins gave the house to the society, knowing Taylor had an affinity for the town's distinguished history.

Guests are invited to take their own lunches and picnic on the lawn surrounding Cedarfield at about noon. Transportation will be arranged by the historical society with the assistance of the Duxbury Bay Maritime School. At 1:15 p.m., a bell will ring and visitors will gather around the rock.

"We're not talking about Plymouth Rock," Browne said. "We're talking about what people probably imagine Plymouth Rock is."

The mammoth rock was the site of the first Sabbath sermon in the New World. The exploring party from *The Mayflower* took shelter on Clark's island after their mast and rudder broke. The following day happened to be the Sabbath, and in spite of their troubles, they observed the day of rest.

It was also on this rock that they voted to establish their plantation at Plymouth Bay, hence the names: Pulpit or Election Rock. The island was named for the leader of the expedition, John Clark, who was the

first mate of *The Mayflower*.

William Bradford, Myles Standish and Elder William Brewster accompanied Clark.

When the bells chime this time around, picnickers will hear a sermon delivered by one of Duxbury's newest ministers, Catherine Cullen of the First Parish Church, which was founded by Brewster, who left Plymouth to help settle in Duxbury.

"We tend to ask newly installed ministers to do the sermon because we think it's a good chance for them to get to know people here," Browne said, although those delivering the address are not always preachers; some are historical experts.

The now deceased Rev. Richard Maxwell, and former president of the Pilgrim Society, delivered the sermon one year, Browne said.

"He just emphasized a lot of the same themes you hear over and over again," Browne said. "But there was something about the way he stressed the importance the Pilgrims had in establishing the spirit of New England that was inspiring."

Cullen has many years of striking sermons to live up to. She's been reading about the history of the is-

land and its inhabitants, she said, as well as that of the first sermon.

Essentially, she said, her own thoughts about her upcoming address can be boiled down to two themes: keeping the Sabbath despite the circumstances and gratitude.

"I'm really inspired that in spite of everything they'd gone through, they still kept the Sabbath," Cullen said. "And I want to talk about keeping the Sabbath – not in the sense of going to church, but taking a day to slow down from work and just honoring the need for the human spirit to rest."

Cullen said gratitude is something that we sometimes overlook, but that she was "struck" by the fact that these settlers were grateful just to be alive.

Though the sermon has not yet been written, Cullen's ideas have been well mapped out in her head, based on these themes.

"We only moved to Duxbury three years ago, but I think it's such a typical Duxbury event," Cullen said. "It's so filled with history and community."

To sign up for transportation, call the historical society at (781) 934-6106.



Staff photo/Susan

**Basking** — Flowers enjoy the sun.